

BUILDING CONSENSUS: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON THE G-20 SUMMIT IN DELHI, INDIA'S PRESIDENCY

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September 08, 2023 12:20 am | Updated 09:25 am IST

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India's big moment as [host of the G-20 Summit](#) will arrive this weekend, as world leaders gather in New Delhi for the main event marking the year of its presidency. The group is seen as a more egalitarian version of the G-7 as it includes the leadership of the developing world, and is now the "pre-eminent forum for global economic cooperation". At the start of its presidency last December, it was clear that India would be hamstrung by several events. The global economic headwinds, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, meant a challenging environment for New Delhi in ensuring that all countries were willing to contribute resources for imperatives such as climate finance, and investment in health and poverty alleviation. The Ukraine conflict and the sanctions against Russia were next, practically splitting the G-20 down the middle. This made forging a joint statement even last year difficult. But Indonesian President Joko Widodo was able to ensure a tenuous consensus by travelling to Moscow and Kyiv and enlisting India's support. India's presidency also came amidst continuing bilateral tensions with China over its border moves. This has become an additional problem for India's G-20 Sherpa team as China has played spoiler at many a meeting. The government's decision to hold the G-20 summit two months early, instead of in November, the practice, has given officials less time to ensure that the Leaders' declaration is ready; some of the heavy lifting on building consensus will now be left to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to handle.

In the face of such odds, India's efforts to ensure the vitality of the G-20 process have been valiant and also a well-thought-out one. Mr. Modi made it clear from the beginning that India would not take sides in the Ukraine conflict, and instead focused on issues affecting the global south, holding a summit of developing countries, putting issues of food, fertilizer and energy security, multilateral reform and global governance above geopolitical issues. India even hosted the Voice of Global South Summit. Mr. Modi also championed the induction of the African Union into the G-20, which will be a feather in India's cap if it goes through. Internally, the Indian G-20 presidency has been marked by a distinct effort to "democratise" the process by holding 220 meetings across 60 Indian cities, which, though colossally expensive, has ensured a showcasing of India's diversity. India's G-20 moment is already memorable, but the days ahead will be crucial in cementing its legacy. That legacy hinges on ensuring a truce among its fractious members, that allows for a consensus over the vision of "One Earth, One Family, One Future" in the next few days.

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